Raising Caring, Respectful, Ethical Children: Seven Tips for Parents and Caretakers

Key experts and leading organizations in the fields of social and emotional learning, character development, and moral development offer guidelines

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CAMBRIDGE, MA—Research in human development clearly shows that the seeds of empathy, caring, and compassion are present from early in life. But to become caring, ethical people, children need adults to help them at every stage of childhood to nurture these seeds along the way.

The following tips are a set of guideposts to raising caring, respectful, and ethical children, along with tips for putting them into action.

The tips are based on the collective wisdom of key experts and leading organizations in the fields of social and emotional learning, character development, and moral development. They represent an effort to send common and clear messages to parents and caretakers across diverse perspectives and organizations.

The experts and organizations were brought together by the Making Caring Common project at the Harvard Graduate School of Education to address issues such as bullying, social-emotional development, character education, building strong communities, and empowering youth. They have informally agreed to:

1. Periodically place the combined power of our organizations behind jointly created documents that articulate key principles, practices, and messages for parents, schools, policymakers and community institutions, such as our recent document articulating principles and tips for parents
2. Share information and resources
3. Assist one another with dissemination of resources to parents, schools, and others in the field
4. Generate innovative partnerships among participating organizations that advance the field

The following experts and organizations added their insights, research, and expertise to create this set of guideposts:

Ashoka
Jessica Berlinski, Adaptive Health Systems
Career Training Concepts / H.E.A.R.—Helping Everyone Achieve Respect
Cartoon Network
Center for Character and Citizenship at the University of Missouri-St. Louis
About Making Caring Common
Making Caring Common (MCC), a project of the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE), aims to help educators, parents, and communities raise children who are caring, respectful, and responsible toward others and their communities. www.makingcaringcommon.org

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